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Cap 2

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "DDT in the Home"...Information from the entomologists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Early in 1944 we began getting reports from overseas about a new insecticide. The boys in Europe used it as a delousing agent...the boys in the South Pacific killed mosquitoes and other disease carrying insects with it. Those first stories made DDT sound like a wonder-worker. And many's the homemaker who...on hearing them...wished she had some of the powder. Just enough to kill the pesky insects that invaded her home. But then...all the DDT went to war. Now...some of it's coming our way. And homemakers are ready to welcome it with great joy. There's only one drawback. DDT turns out not to be the cure-all of the insect problem many people expected.

The entomologists of the United States Department of Agriculture explain that when the military or Public Health Service use DDT -- they apply it under the direction of trained personnel, in formulas worked out especially for their purposes. No matter how potent any insecticide is, it must be used properly to get results. That means it must be used in the right form and in the right places for the right time length to kill the bugs. DDT is no exception.

Because scientists working with DDT have spent most of their time on fitting the new insecticide to war purposes, they haven't been able to complete their experiments on the best practical ways to use DDT around the home.

But they have discovered certain facts. In general...they know that DDT acts more slowly in killing some insects than other poisons. On the other hand, one application of it often lasts for weeks.

As for its effects on human beings, DDT is not as poisonous as some of the insecticides we already use. But too much of it will make a person sick. That's

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why gardeners will have to be careful about using it on their vegetables. And fruit growers won't be able to use it on their fruits. Fortunately, a little DDT goes a long way. And ordinarily, it will most likely be used in compounds containing from only one tenth of one percent to about ten percent of the poison.

As for the kinds of compounds DDT goes into -- it can be used as a dust, as a spray in oil, as a spray in water emulsion or water dispersible powders. People will want to use the oil spray with care because in the oil, DDT can penetrate the skin and get into the blood stream.

Wettable DDT powder could become quite popular for use outside the house. In this form, DDT mixes easily with water, it has no odor, it's harmless to the skin of man or the coats of animals and it presents no fire hazard. This form won't be so popular inside the house because it leaves a residue of DDT crystals that show up on furniture and walls.

Inside the house, the DDT dust and a mixture of kerosene and technical DDT may prove to be most useful. The dust...containing varying amounts of the poison...will be used to fight cockroaches and fleas. The kerosene-DDT spray is best against bedbugs, mosquitoes, flies and some species of ants.

When spraying with DDT, the homemaker won't use the same techniques she uses with other sprays. Instead of getting a mist that falls on insects as they fly through it ...she'll spray DDT on walls and ceilings...on screens and baseboards so the insects will be poisoned as they light or crawl over the residue of DDT crystals.

By the time DDT becomes plentiful enough for us to be able to walk into any store where we usually get insecticides and find it...(and that time isn't too far off now) ...it will probably be put up in the form best suited to the homemaker's purpose. If she wants to kill ants...she can get the compound to kill ants. If it's mosquitoes she's after...she'll get another DDT compound. Directions will most likely be printed on the package...so there'll be less danger of anyone's going wrong in applying it.

No...DDT may not be a cure-all for insect pests...but it is an excellent insecticide. And if we use it correctly...we can expect good results.

